

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH UPDATE

SPRING 2009

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Welcome to the first edition of the Neighborhood Watch Update!

This newsletter has been a long time in coming, and hopefully you feel that it has been worth the wait. It is a reflection of months of brainstorming from both Crime Prevention and the Chief of Police Services.

This newsletter is designed to provide information, tips, alerts and crime statistics. It will be mailed out quarterly to Neighborhood Watch participants.

You will find some articles that will be in every issue, such as "Ask Deputy Nelson". As this will continue to be a work in progress, if there is an article or information that you would like to see included in this update, please email me at krowe@ci.lake-forest.ca.us.

I want to thank each and every one of you for participating in such a vital program. We wouldn't be able to be one of the safest cities in the nation without the help of our residents!

Kirsten Rowe

Crime Prevention Specialist

**TIME CHANGE CHECKLIST**

With the time change on March 8, now is the perfect time to take care of those items that should be checked every 6 months. Ensure that you and your family are as safe as possible by following the following checklist:

- **Change the clocks, change the batteries.** Smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors save lives. Even if your detectors are hard-wired into your home, you still need to make sure that you are protected in the event of a power outage with a battery backup.
- **Check the first aid kit.** Summer is coming, bring along with it the bumps, scrapes and stings of outdoor activities. Replace any missing or low supplies.
- **Make or review your family emergency plan.** When a emergency strikes, will your family know what to do?
- **Change your flashlight batteries.** Keep a working flashlight near your bed, in the kitchen, family room and children's room(s).
- **Check the level of your fire extinguisher.** Make sure that the indicator shows it in the "operable" range.
- **Check the food in your emergency supply kit.** Make sure that you aren't approaching the expiration date. If the date is getting close, put it in your pantry to get eaten and cycle new food into your supply kit.

**DON'T TOSS YOUR
REPLACED BATTERIES!**

Don't toss your replaced batteries from your smoke detector just yet. While they aren't fully charged, replaced batteries can still do duty in children's toys, media players or electronic devices. Squeeze the last drop of power out of them before you recycle! Or you can use the free battery recycling containers at Lake Forest City Hall.

ASK DEPUTY NELSON...

Deputy Nelson: How do I dispute a parking ticket? - Tom, Lake Forest II

There are two ways that you can take care of a parking ticket. If you feel that you were issued the ticket in error, you may contest the ticket. To do so, you can request an Administrative Review within 21 days from the issue date of the citation. Submit a written statement with any supporting docu-

mentation or photographs. You can appeal online at www.ticketwizard5000.com or send the appeal to the address on the back of the citation.

If you are going to pay for the citation in full, you can go to www.ticketwizard5000.com or make your check, money order or cashier's check payable to City of Lake Forest and mail it to the address on the back of the citation. If

you make the payment by mail, make sure that you note the citation number on the check.

Remember, you must contest or pay the citation in full **within 21 days** of the issue date. 5 or more unpaid parking citations can result in your car being impounded, which only compounds the fees. You can also call (800) 989-2058 for more information.



Deputy Rich Nelson is the Administrative Deputy for Lake Forest Police Services. **To submit a question to Deputy Nelson, please email crimeprevention@ci.lake-forest.ca.us**

BURGLARY — BREAKING IN WITH THE INTENT TO STEAL

A professional burglar can outwit any lock, alarm system, window or door on the market. But in 99 out of 100 burglaries, it is not a professional thief but more typically a young teenager living in the neighborhood or a drug addict committing the crime. They are most likely looking for something they can sell for quick cash. You can cut down on your chance of being burglarized by becoming a **hard target** and applying the 3 D's of protection: deterrence, delay and detection.

Deterrence

Your home and car have one of the best deterrence devices on the market: locks. Most burglaries occur because people don't lock their cars or homes. Leaving these areas unlocked is equivalent to leaving an

"Open House" sign for everyone to see! Good lighting, an alert Neighborhood Watch program, sturdy doors, windows and locks also make it hard for a burglar to break in.

Delay

Good home security will slow a burglar down. They will not waste time or expose their intentions for long if they can not find an easy target. A few minutes delay or an alert neighbor, and they will be caught. They usually know that and will go elsewhere.

Detection

An alarm system covering the perimeter (doors and windows) and interior (motion detectors) of your home, a barking dog and a good Neighborhood Watch program are your best protectors.

But even with the 3 D's of protection in practice, the best piece of advice any police officer will give you is to make sure that you **lock your doors and windows and don't leave any valuables in plain sight!** A burglar can get an easy \$20 from spare change lying in several vehicles.

Being a good witness is also important. Physical features are more important than clothing. Make sure that you take note of the following: color of hair, eyes and skin; facial features / hair; approximate age; approximate height; scars, marks and tattoos; and speech peculiarities or accents. If a vehicle is used, try to get the make, model, color and license plate. If you are able to safely do so, try to get the direction of travel of the suspect.



Make yourself a HARD TARGET! Lock your doors and windows of your house and car, and don't leave valuables in plain sight!

Most home burglaries occur between 9 am and 2 pm, whereas most vehicle burglaries occur between 11 pm and 4 am. Make sure you call the Sheriff's Department to report any suspicious activity!

FBI E-SCAM ALERT: WORK-AT-HOME SCAMS AND VEHICLE SALE SCAMS

Consumers need to be vigilant when seeking employment online. The Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) has received numerous complaints from individuals who have fallen victim to work-at-home scams.

Victims are often hired to "process payments", "transfer funds", or "reship products." These job scams involve the victims receiving and cashing fraudulent checks, transferring illegally obtained funds for the criminals, or receiving stolen merchandise and shipping it to the criminals.

Other victims sign up to be a "mystery shopper", or they receive fraudulent checks with instructions to cash the checks and wire the funds to "test" a company's services.

Victims are told they will be compensated with a portion of the merchandise or funds.

Work-at-home schemes attract otherwise innocent individuals, causing them to become part of criminal schemes without realizing they are engaging in illegal behavior.

Job scams often provide criminals the opportunity to commit identity theft when victims provide their personal information, sometimes even bank account information, to their potential "employer". The criminal / employer can then use the victim's information to open credit cards, post on-line auctions, register websites, etc., in the victim's names to commit additional crimes.

The FBI also continues to receive reports of individuals victimized while attempting to purchase vehicles via the internet. Victims find attractively priced vehicles advertised at different Internet classified ad sites. Most of the scams include some type of third-party vehicle protection program to ensure a safe transaction. After receiving convincing e-mails from the phony vehicle protection program, the victims are directed to send either the full payment or a percentage of the payment to the third-party agent via a wire payment service. No vehicles are delivered to the victims.

In a new twist, scammers are posing as members of the US military. The fictitious military personnel in the scam

have either been sent to a foreign country to improve military relations, or need to sell a vehicle quickly and cheaply because of their upcoming deployment to either Iraq or Afghanistan.

Consumers are advised to do as much due diligence as possible before engaging in transactions to purchase vehicles advertised online. Consumers are also cautioned to be aware of the rules of or warnings posted by the websites they visit. If someone is asking you as a consumer to break or avoid the rules, they could be trying to scam you.

If you have fallen victim to any type of scam, please notify the IC3 by filing a complaint at www.ic3.gov.

GET "SMART": REQUEST A SPEED MONITORING AWARENESS RADAR TRAILER

Residents are often frustrated at what can be done about speeding in their neighborhood. Whether your concerns are the children playing outside, backing your car out of the driveway, or a blind corner, speeding is a neighborhood concern that often "hits" home.

Lake Forest Police Services can place a Speed Monitoring Awareness Radar Trailer (SMART) on your residential street. Drivers approaching

the trailer will see the posted speed limit displayed, as well as their speed as detected by the radar device within the trailer. The SMART will record data such as the total number of vehicles and their speeds during the times it is monitoring traffic.

While traffic enforcement through visible patrols and traffic citations remain an important component of our overall traffic safety strategy, the use of the SMART may

help drivers become aware of exactly how fast they are driving and encourage them to slow down.

Residents who would like to request the SMART on their residential street can contact Aubrey Dietrich at (949) 461-3546 or email



When was the last time you had a Neighborhood Watch meeting in your neighborhood?
To schedule one, call Kirsten Rowe at (949) 461-3546.

Make Yourself a Hard Target!

CITY OF LAKE FOREST ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

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The City of Lake Forest, in partnership with the Orange County Sheriff's Department, is dedicated to helping our residents keep themselves, their families and their community safe. Our goal is to provide educational programs and training tools that enable residents and business owners to learn crime prevention strategies that reduce and deter crime.

Important Phone Numbers:

Emergency: **911**

Sheriff's Department Non Emergency: (949) 770-6011

City of Lake Forest: (949) 461-3400

Crime Prevention: (949) 461-3546

Graffiti Hotline: (949) 461-3583

OCSO Website: www.ocsd.org

City of Lake Forest Website: www.city-lakeforest.com

Car Seat Installations: (949) 461-3543
or
(949) 461-3546

Vacation Checks:

Remember, Lake Forest Police Services offers **free** Vacation Checks of your home. Go to the city website at www.city-lakeforest.com to sign up for this service or contact Kirsten Rowe at (949) 461-3546 for more information.

INSIDE LAKE FOREST: GRAFFITI AND THE TAGRS PROGRAM

Graffiti and its associated clean-up costs are having an enormous impact in the City of Lake Forest. Although incidents of graffiti have remained somewhat constant over the past eight years, the cost to remove graffiti or repair property damage caused by graffiti has increased substantially. For example, the cost to remove graffiti has reached almost \$10,000 a month. This cost only represents the city's expense to remove graffiti and does not take into account the many thousands

of dollars private citizens and businesses incur as victims of graffiti. Graffiti also affects our communities in many ways, including directly influencing the crime rate and attracting more serious criminal activity.

"Taggers" typically consider themselves artists and are very proud of their graffiti. Each tagger strives to be more artistic with their graffiti in order to gain recognition. They will try to put their moniker in as many places as possible. The larger and more riskier the location, the

more recognition and / or respect the taggers receive from their peers.

In July 2008, the City of Lake Forest in conjunction with the Orange County Sheriff's Department created a Graffiti Task Force. Two Lake Forest deputies were assigned to the Task Force, with the purpose of locating and identifying taggers within the city. Through investigative techniques, the task force successfully identified a large group of taggers that were responsible for approximately 85% of the graffiti in Lake

Forest.

Lake Forest is also one of the first cities in Orange County to participate in the TAGRS graffiti reporting program. Pictures of graffiti within the city are downloaded to a database, along with any other information found. If a tagger is identified, that person can be held responsible for all of the documented incidents. These two programs have helped to lower Lake Forest's clean-up costs to approximately \$3,000 a month—a savings of over \$7,000!

